

sure that we were on the leading edge of issues critical to Michigan.

He has guided my office through countless high-profile events and crises: the great recession and auto crisis, the Flint water crisis, several government shutdowns, the COVID-19 pandemic, the January 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol, and two impeachment trials. Through it all, Eric has provided stability and focus—a focus on working in a bipartisan manner to pass important legislation and to make progress for Michigan and for our entire country.

Last week, I was humbled to be recognized by the Center for Effective Lawmaking as the most effective Senator in the 116th Congress. Recognition of this sort does not happen without having an incredible team. Eric played a critical role in helping me enact 10 bills into law—the most of any Senator from either party over the last 2 years.

And I know that Eric will tell you, without a doubt, that there is no “I” in team. As a leader, Eric has focused on hiring talented staff, both in DC and across Michigan, staff that humbly, selflessly, and effectively serve the people of Michigan each and every day. With Eric’s laser focus on what is best for Michigan, together with our team, we have secured record funding to protect the Great Lakes, worked to increase security at our Nation’s borders, expanded apprenticeships and skills training, saved taxpayer dollars, and made the Federal Government more efficient, all the while standing up for Michigan workers, including those working in our auto industry.

Eric is always on the leading edge, and he has distinguished himself through his work with Michigan’s auto manufacturers and automotive stakeholders. In particular, Eric has helped drive policy efforts focused on innovation and emerging technologies so that in the near future, self-driving vehicles will not only be safely deployed and save thousands of lives on our highways but also be developed and built in Michigan and in the United States, creating good-paying jobs for the next generation of workers.

At every step of the way, through all of his hard work, Eric has carried himself with his characteristic enthusiasm and passion. It is only fitting, as an alum of the University of Michigan and a fervent—very fervent—Wolverine fan, he has, and I quote, an “enthusiasm unknown to mankind.” Whether it is policy, politics, casework, or an issue important to constituents, there is no doubt that Eric approaches it with keen interest and with high energy and that he will think through every single possible angle.

But Eric has been much more than just a chief aide. Colleen and I feel incredibly fortunate not only for all that Eric has done to lead my office and deliver for the people of Michigan; we count on him as a confidant and a dear friend.

Eric, you will be missed dearly as you depart for your next endeavor in

the private sector. But I am grateful for what you have built, and I know that it will endure—a culture of teamwork, hard work, productivity, and a commitment to what is best for Michiganders.

Eric, Colleen and I know that you have devoted countless hours to a job that you love while balancing the two most important roles in your life: being a loving husband and a father. I have been proud to watch you celebrate many of life’s milestones over the years, including the birth of your two beloved sons, and I will certainly never forget your eldest son Avi’s birthday on November 4, 2014, the day Michiganders elected me to the U.S. Senate.

Eric, Colleen and I wish you much success, and we hope you enjoy this next chapter with Dena, Avi, and Ethan. Know that Colleen and I will always be thankful beyond measure for your service and for your leadership and that you will forever be part of Team PETERS.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I be able to complete my remarks before the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Mr. THUNE pertaining to the introduction of S. 797 are printed in today’s RECORD under “Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.”)

Mr. THUNE. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to complete my remarks before the vote is called.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. MURRAY. And for the information of the Senators, I will speak for about 7 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Thank you.

#### GEORGIA SHOOTING

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I would like to start by taking a moment to address the awful violence we saw in Georgia yesterday.

Everyone, especially elected officials, needs to not just speak out but to act against this deadly display of hate.

To the victims and their families and to the Asian-American and Pacific-Islander community in Washington State and nationwide, my heart is with you not just today but going forward. I will continue sending a strong message that hate against you must stop, and I will keep working to ensure your safety in light of the terrible surge in hate crimes we have seen in our State and across the country.

#### NOMINATION OF XAVIER BECERRA

Now, Madam President, I rise today to voice my strong support for Attorney General Becerra to serve as Secretary of Health and Human Services.

After 4 years of attacks on families’ healthcare from President Trump,

after a year of this pandemic ravaging our Nation, the challenges that lie ahead of us, especially when it comes to healthcare, are numerous; they are enormous; and they are absolutely urgent.

The uninsured rate, the drug prices, and healthcare costs have all skyrocketed. Confidence in our public health agencies have plummeted. Already painful health inequities have grown deeper. And this pandemic has absolutely devastated communities and pushed our healthcare system to the brink.

COVID-19 has killed over a half a million people, and that number continues to rise. When it comes to the hard work ahead to not only end this pandemic but rebuild a stronger and fairer country, it is clear we need an experienced leader at the Department of Health and Human Services. It is clear we don’t have a second to waste, and it is clear Attorney General Becerra is the right pick for this job.

His track record shows he has the convictions and the qualifications for the task at hand. As a Member of Congress for over two decades, he has proven himself a skilled legislator who understands healthcare policy. As attorney general of one of the Nation’s largest justice departments, he has proven himself as a leader capable of heading a complex Department like HHS. And throughout all of his work, he has proven himself as a champion for patients and public health.

In Congress, he worked to help more people get quality, affordable healthcare by passing the Children’s Health Insurance Program and the Affordable Care Act. In California, he has fought in court to defend the Affordable Care Act and time and time again has gone to court to fight for patients, like when he won a \$70 million settlement from pharmaceutical companies for blocking cheaper generic drugs from market, when he won a settlement from opioid manufacturers behind the addiction crisis and joined a bipartisan investigation into whether opioids were unlawfully marketed, when he sued e-cigarette companies from marketing tobacco products to children and led a bipartisan effort with the Republican attorney general of Nebraska to protect kids from tobacco imagery, or when he worked to investigate companies and hold them accountable for putting workers at risk by failing to follow COVID-19 safety measures.

Attorney General Becerra has also worked to acknowledge and address issues driving inequities in healthcare. As leader of California’s Department of Justice, he fought in court against the Trump administration rule that undermined care for the LGBTQ community, against the administration’s constant efforts to undermine reproductive healthcare and against its blatant disregard for the well-being of migrant children.

Attorney General Becerra also established a new Bureau of Disability